

" The book was produced without the services of any publisher. For the original edition, we decided ourselves the format, chose the type, and gave the order to the printer Walter Crane kindly designed for us a striking cover, and Miss May Morns a decorative back, both of which we imposed on the book-binder, taking care, with both printer and binder, to choose Turns paying the Trade Union rate of wages, and of good repute among the operatives. We issued a circular asking for orders, and as the orders were received the copies were packed up at the Honorary Secretary's house by himself and the volunteer Assistant Secretary, and posted to the subscribers. To our surprise, the first edition was immediately sold out, guiding a modest profit to the Fabian Society, to which the seven authors had formally conveyed their copyright. A second impression was also rapidly sold, and then the book was entrusted to a publishing firm for the issue of successive cheap editions. It has been repeatedly reprinted in the United States, and has been translated into most of the languages of Europe "

There are many interesting things in this 1920 preface, not the least interesting being its author's own statement that he finds himself "mainly concerned to note where we went wrong, and what we omitted." Most of those omissions he was himself to correct, long before the preface to the 1920 edition was written. What they were, the book made a great stir, at the time represented the sounding of a quite new voice. It has been described by G. D. H. Cole, no wilfully amiable critic of anything written over the name of Webb, as "The most important single publication in the history of British Socialism."

For one, anyhow, of its authors, this coming out into

the open represented a decision clearly  
taken, and the  
end of a phase, clearly seen Sidney Webb  
had indicated  
the point when he felt that he ought to take a  
share in  
administration learn the machine from inside if  
possible,  
permeate and control it Impassioned  
Londoner as he  
was, he hailed the establishment of the  
London County  
Council with enthusiasm, and had helped,  
potently, to  
bring its Progressive majority into being The  
next stage.